

I LOCAL FUNDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- A. The state offers extensive technical support to local agencies through a variety of venues. The funding the state has to support local planning and projects are pass-through monies from either the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program or the Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Programs. The State Hazard Mitigation Officer at the NEMA office oversees both these funding programs and coordinates state mitigation planning. Limited funds for planning are also available through the Flood Mitigation Program administered by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR).
- B. NEMA has supplied and will continue to supply technical support to the local jurisdictions by delivering presentations to local officials including County Commissioners and City Councils on Hazard Mitigation programs available and on the importance of mitigation for the reduction of losses from disaster situations. Beyond simply presenting the information, NEMA actively encourages local agencies to develop their own mitigation plans.
- C. The NDNR presents training and programs on flood plane management, flood insurance and the Community.
- D. Member agencies of the Climate Assessment and Response Committee (CARC) have offered public information products to local jurisdictions to be given to their citizens.
- E. Nebraska Forest Service provides information to local governments and citizens on wildfire mitigation including an interactive website on how to make your home safer in the event of a wildfire.

II. LOCAL PLAN INTEGRATION

- A. Nebraska is proposing to develop local regional plans around the twenty-three Natural Resources Districts. As explained in the planning process, the NRDs in Nebraska have unique statutory authority and are able to do planning and projects anywhere within their jurisdictional boundaries. Reasons for approaching the NRDs to take the lead in local planning are:
 - 1.) There are ninety-three counties in Nebraska and only twenty-three NRDs. The smaller number makes for easier training and a more cost-effective way to create local hazard mitigation plans.
 - 2.) Many of the counties in Nebraska have a low population and low vulnerability. The county emergency management offices that would normally take the lead in development of a county plan, are either one-person offices or are responsible for 2-8 counties. By combining counties into larger jurisdictions, the Emergency Managers are able to assist in the process rather than being the leading agency.

- 3.) Natural Resources Districts already have general knowledge of hazard mitigation planning due to previously accomplished flood mitigation efforts.
- B. The proposal to initiate this program is to do a pilot plan with the Papio/Missouri NRD in coordination with Douglas County including the City of Omaha. Initial meetings have been held and both parties have agreed to begin the process and willing to produce the regional plan. This pilot will begin in early 2005 and be completed by Spring of 2006. Other NRDs will be invited to a meeting and training session in early 2005 to learn of the planning program and discuss their interest in planning for and with the counties and municipalities in their districts. The priority for future planning grants will be first to those NRDs with the greatest populations, second to the NRDs with the greatest risks, and third to jurisdictions who wish to develop plans independent of the NRD.
 - C. The State Mitigation Plan is a living document and will change as the Natural Resources Districts submit their plans. Local plans will be linked to the state plan in Attachment 4. This will identify the jurisdictions with a completed plan and the top priority projects they have identified during their planning process. If the information (specifically mitigation projects) addressed in a local plan is not already in the State Mitigation Plan, NEMA will review them then take appropriate measures to include them in the State Plan. By doing this, NEMA will facilitate the identification of jurisdictions eligible for Hazard Mitigation Projects that enhance State goals and objectives.
 - D. Once a plan is submitted to the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, it will be reviewed by the State Hazard Mitigation Officer or the Response and Recovery Section Manager, using the Review Crosswalk and will either return the plan for revisions or forward the plan to FEMA Region VII for their review. The review will be completed as soon as possible but no later than 30 days following the receipt of the plan at NEMA. If the review will take longer than the 30 days, NEMA will contact the submitting jurisdiction in writing of the delay and the reason for the delay.
 - E. Counties and Municipalities will still play important roles in the creation of local hazard mitigation plans. They will provide applicable information to the NRDs for proper mitigation planning. By asking counties for lists of critical infrastructure, NEMA prompted counties to accomplish one important step in hazard mitigation planning- identifying critical buildings and structures. This information will aid in the creation of local plans.

III. PRIORITIZING LOCAL ASSISTANCE

- A. When money becomes available for mitigation both pre and post-disaster, Planning projects will receive priority, particularly for Pre-disaster grant money, based on the criteria listed in paragraph II.B above. Several steps are taken to decide what projects should be undertaken.

1. The State Hazard Mitigation Officer will request an application from every County Emergency Manager, Natural Resource District, Public Power District in the state.
2. The State Hazard Mitigation Team will review the applications for completeness, cost/benefit analysis, and for project and jurisdiction eligibility. There is the necessary technical expertise within state government to make these assessment in the following agencies
 - a. The Nebraska Department of Roads has qualified engineers that complete environmental studies for building and demolition projects. They also have a section of engineers that continually provide wetlands and habitat studies and mitigation plans.
 - b. The Nebraska State Historical Society performs Historic Preservation studies and keeps records of Nebraska Historic buildings.
 - c. The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources have three Certified Floodplain Managers and one Professional Certified Engineer. The NDNR has and will continue to perform benefit/cost analysis for projects.
 - d. The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency's State Hazard Mitigation Officer reviews each application for compliance with FEMA regulations as well as for eligibility and completeness.
3. For a jurisdiction to be eligible for grants, it must have an approved mitigation plan and identify the project applied for in the mitigation plan. If the project is not listed in their plan, the SHMO will request documentation on why the project has been submitted to the Taskforce. The team will also consider communities with the highest risk, repetitive loss properties and intense development pressures, before recommending projects to the Taskforce for approval.
4. The basis for criterion for assistance will mirror that of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.
 - a. The extent and nature of the hazard to be mitigation.
 - b. The degree of commitment of jurisdiction to reduce damages for future natural disasters.
 - c. The degree of commitment by the jurisdiction support ongoing non-Federal support for the hazard mitigation measures to be carried out.
 - d. The extent to which the technical and financial assistance is consistent with other assistance provided under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.

- e. The extent to which prioritized, cost-effective mitigation activities that produce meaningful and definable outcomes are clearly identified.
- f. If the jurisdiction has an approved mitigation plan.
- g. The opportunity to fund activities that maximize net benefits to society.
- h. The extent to which assistance will fund mitigation activities in small and impoverished communities. In addition, as stated in the Nebraska Hazard Mitigation Administrative Plan, the following considerations will be made.
 - 1) Be in conformance with the Nebraska Mitigation Plan and approved local plans.
 - 2). Have a beneficial impact to the designated disaster area, whether or not it is located in the designated area.
 - 3) Comply with 44 CFR Part 9 floodplain management and protection of wetlands and 44 CFR Part 10 environmental considerations.
 - 4) Solve a problem independently or constitutes a functional portion of a solution where there is assurance that the project as a whole will be completed. Projects that merely identify or analyze hazards or problems are not eligible. This does not preclude funding a study or analysis, so long as mitigation measures actually result from the study or analysis and are part of the total project.
 - 5) Be cost-effective and substantially reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, loss, or suffering resulting from a major disaster.
 - 6) Addresses a problem that has been repetitive or a problem that poses a significant risk if left unsolved.
 - 7) Will not cost more than the anticipated value of the reduction in both direct damages and subsequent negative impacts to the area if future disasters were to occur. Both costs and benefits will be computed on a net present values basis.
 - 8) Has been determined to be the most practical, effective and environmentally sound alternative after consideration of a range of options. If possible, applicants should conduct or arrange for environmental and floodplain management reviews.
 - 9) Contributes, to the extent practicable, for a long-term solution to the problem it is intended to address.

- 10) Considers long-term changes to the area and entities it protects, and has manageable future maintenance and modification requirements.
5. The State Taskforce will meet and identify state priorities based on state goals and objectives, then prioritize the submitted applications.
6. Applications designated as top priority projects will be submitted to the grant agency for approval.

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